

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-08 ISO-00 SR-02 ORM-01 CIAE-00 INR-05

NSAE-00 RSC-01 L-02 SS-15 NSC-05 SP-02 SAM-01 IO-04

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R 221013Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4274

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 6016

E O 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, IS

SUBJECT: ISRAEL PREPARES FOR INCREASED SOVIET IMMIGRATION

1. ENTHUSIASTIC RESPONSE IN ISRAEL TO AGREEMENT ON INCREASED SOVIET EMIGRATION HAS BEEN QUICKLY FOLLOWED BY PLEDGED DETERMINATION TO ABSORB SUCCESSFULLY SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN SOVIET IMMIGRATION. OFFICIAL STATEMENTS GENERALLY CITE FIGURE OF 60,000 PER YEAR.

2. PM RABIN OCT 20 IN DINNER SPEECH (TO UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS) SAID THAT NEXT TO CHALLENGE OF ACHIEVING PEACE HIS GREATEST HOPE IS TO ATTRACT A LARGE NUMBER OF SOVIET JEWS AND TO INTEGRATE THEM SUCCESSFULLY. THIS, HE NOTED, WOULD BE MAJOR TEST FOR JEWS IN ISRAEL AND ABROAD. LABOR MINISTER BARAM REPORTEDLY HAS INSTRUCTED HIS MINISTRY TO PREPARE EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PLANS FOR LARGE WAVE OF NEW IMMIGRANTS. LONG-RANGE HOUSING PROGRAM IS BEING PREPARED IN MINISTRY OF HOUSING, TOGETHER WITH SHORT-RANGE PLANNING FOR HOUSING SOME 90,000 IMMIGRANTS EXPECTED BY APRIL, 1976. IN REPORT TO KNESSET OCT 21 ABSORPTION MINISTER ROSEN SAID GOVT HAD ORDERED ECONOMIC PLANNING FOR VARYING LEVELS OF IMMIGRATION BUT HOPED FOR 60,000 RUSSIANS IN COMING YEAR. IN PLACING DOLLAR TAG ON PROBLEM, JEWISH AGENCY CHAIRMAN SAPIR TOLD REPORTERS IT

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WOULD COST DOLS 1.2 BILLION TO ABSORB 60,000 IMMIGRANTS PER YEAR.

3. WITH SERIOUS HOUSING, EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED OVER PAST YEAR IN ABSORBING CURRENT RATE OF SOVIET IMMIGRATION (SOME 13,000 JAN-SEP 74), THERE IS SERIOUS CONCERN IN ISRAEL ON ABILITY TO ABSORB SHARP INCREASE IN IMMIGRATION. MONEY IS NOT MAIN PROBLEM. SHORTAGES OF CONSTRUCTION LABOR AND MATERIAL PLACE CONSTRAINTS ON EXPANDING HOUSING, PARTICULARLY WITHOUT ADDING UNDUE INFLATIONARY PRESSURES. EMPLOYMENT FIELD IS DIFFICULT DUE TO ACADEMIC/PROFESSIONAL ORIENTATION OF HIGH PERCENTAGE OF SOVIET IMMIGRANTS, DIFFERENCES IN PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND WORK STYLES, AND POSSIBLE SLOW-DOWN IN ISRAELI ECONOMY AS RESULT OF ANTI-INFLATIONARY MEASURES. WITH GROWING DEMAND OF LOW-INCOME GROUPS FOR CONCESSIONS IN HOUSING, EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT, PROGRAMS TO ABSORB SOVIET IMMIGRANTS WILL BRING THEM IN INCREASING CONFLICT WITH ISRAEL'S INDIGENOUS DISADVANTAGED. FINALLY, EXPERIENCE HAS SUGGESTED THAT SOVIET JEWS HAVE BEEN MOST DIFFICULT GROUP IN RECENT IMMIGRATION HISTORY TO INTEGRATE SOCIALLY.

4. GOI MOST LIKELY TO GIVE HIGHER PRIORITIES TO ABSORPTION EFFORTS NOW THAT AGREEMENT ON EMIGRATION HAS BEEN CONCLUDED. THIS WILL POSE FORMIDABLE BURDEN BOTH ON FUNDING AS WELL AS CREATIVE MANAGEMENT OF BIGGER ABSORPTION PROBLEM. SOME ISRAELIS HAVE CITED TO US FIGURE OF AROUND 45,000 ANNUALLY AS NUMBER OF IMMIGRANTS THAT CAN BE ABSORBED WITH SOME DEGREE OF SUCCESS. FAILURE TO MEET THE NEW CHALLENGE WILL LIKELY INCREASE THE DROP-OUT RATE IN VIENNA AND THE NUMBER OF DISGRUNTLED IMMIGRANTS SEEKING TO LEAVE ISRAEL. KEATING

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